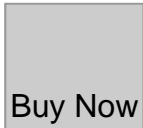




Reform row poses danger for party that wants to win

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Reform row poses danger for party that wants to win

Banzai Japan Music Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPEImgQJGBo>

**Political parties led by Nigel Farage are prone to the occasional outbreak of spectacular acrimony and the most colourful rows.**

In 2016, there were [allegations of a punch up](#) between two UK Independence Party members of the European Parliament.

In 2014, a UKIP councillor [suggested the legalisation of gay marriage](#) had caused a spate of bad weather.

Nigel Farage used to be the leader of UKIP.

This current tit for tat spat involving the Reform UK leader Farage and the MP for Great Yarmouth, Rupert Lowe, has seen both sides flinging a lot of mud at each other.

So far, so conventional.

But, in a novel twist, I revealed that the referee has now got involved too.

When I say the referee, I mean the [senior lawyer hired by Reform UK to look into an element of the row](#).

Vitriol, insults and anger are there for all to see, from pretty much everyone involved.

Let's be clear: Reform UK are not unique when it comes to volcanic rows – just ask the Conservatives or Labour within the last decade.

And both those parties will tell you the impact it has.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJsGZL-zb54>

It is a cliché to say divided parties don't win elections because it is broadly true and Nigel Farage gets that.

This is more than just a clash of personalities too.

There are differences of policy instinct between the two men.

Lowe has advocated mass deportations, something Farage doesn't think is practical or popular.

Lowe has praised the jailed far right activist Stephen Yaxley Lennon, known by his supporters as Tommy Robinson.

Farage refuses to have anything to do with him.

One of the standout trends in British politics since the general election last July has been the rise and

rise of Reform UK.

### [Banzai Japan Music Video](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3syHHGzkF\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3syHHGzkF_s)

Granted, opinion polls years and years out from the next general election should be treated with some scepticism, but Reform's growth in popularity has been sustained and has certainly been enough to spook their political rivals.

But this is a turbulent moment for the party.

Farage criticised Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky for not wearing a suit at the White House and the Reform leader's critics like to point to admiration he has expressed in the past for the Russian President Vladimir Putin's abilities as a "political operator".

He has also made much of his closeness to and admiration for President Trump, when opinion polls in the UK suggest America's leader is not popular here.

Both Labour and the Conservatives have seized on this in various ways – keen to point to instincts from Farage that are not wildly popular.

And some opinion polls suggest Reform's march upwards in popularity may be easing.

Now this humdinger of a row with Rupert Lowe.

Nigel Farage's parties have bounced back from spats like this one before.

The question this time is whether these are growing pains of a rapidly expanding and professionalising outfit or something more chronically limiting.

To Nigel Farage's admirers, he is one of the politicians of his generation without which Reform and its predecessors would be nothing.

To his critics, he is allergic to rival tall poppies and has a long history of provoking simmering resentments and colossal bust ups.

If Reform is to achieve its stated ambition of winning the next general election, it will need to channel all of what Farage offers and much, much more – and not descend into the kind of bickering which opponents will quickly seize upon and exploit.

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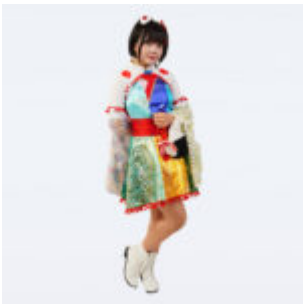
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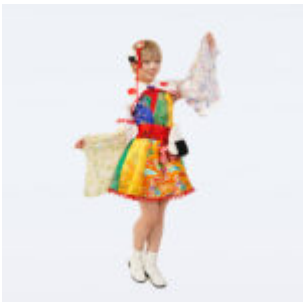
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